

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## The Methodology of Salvation Concerning the Obligation of Straightening the Ranks in the Salaah

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Source: *Minhaaj an-Najaat fee Wujoob Taswiyatis Sufoof fees Salaah*.

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### Mentioning the Proof for the Obligation of the **Imaam** Facing the People while Straightening the Rows\*

1 - On the authority of Anas bin Maalik, (رضي الله عنه), that he said:

The **Iqaamah** was called for the **Salaah**, so the Messenger of Allaah, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), faced us, and said,

{ أَقِيمُوا الصُّفُوفَ فَإِنِّي أَرَأَكُمْ }

“Straighten your rows and align yourselves side by side for surely I see you from behind my back.”

\* Translator's note: Shaykh Fawzee's extensive *Hadeeth* checking has been summarized to make the book more accessible for the ordinary reader.

[Related by **Bukhaaree** in his **Saheeh** (2/208), **Muslim** in his **Saheeh** (1/324), and **Nasaa'ee** in his **Sunan al-Kubaraa** (1/288)]

2 – On the authority of an-Nu'maan bin Basheer, (رضي الله عنه), that he said:

The Messenger of Allaah, (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), faced us and said: “Straighten your ranks, three times. I swear by Allaah that you will straighten your rows or Allaah will divide your hearts.”

[The **Hadeeth** is **Hasan**. Related by **Aboo Daawood** (1/178) in his **Sunan, Daaraqutnee** (1/282 and 283) in his **Sunan**, and **Bayhaqee** (3/ 100 and 101) in his **Sunan al-Kubaraa**]

His statement, “*Align yourselves side by side...*,” i.e. clings and sticks together until there are no gaps between you, like a building that is aligned and fastened together.<sup>1</sup>

Shaykh Naasirud Deen al-Albaanee stated, “It is said about alignment: The building is aligned since it is aligned and fastened together. And from this is His statement, The Exalted,

كأنهم بنيان مرصوص

“They are like a building tightly fastened together.”

Soorah Saff (61): 4

This means that they unite themselves and stick together until what is between them is connected and not detached.<sup>2</sup> (The end of his speech)

I say, align your rows with union amongst yourselves connecting yourselves with no discrimination or distinction.<sup>3</sup>

Shaykh Naasirud Deen al-Albaanee has stated in his **Saheehah** (1/72), “There are two pertinent benefits in these two **Hadeeth**:

- Firstly, the obligation of straightening the rows, equalizing them, and aligning them. The origin concerning it is that it is obligatory unless there is a conjunction (i.e. some

<sup>1</sup> Refer to **Haashiyah as-Sindee 'alaa Sunan an-Nasaa'ee** (2/92).

<sup>2</sup> Refer to **Haashiyah Saheeh at-Targheeb wat Tarheeb of al-Albaanee** (3/198).

<sup>3</sup> Refer to **Haashiyah as-Sindee 'alaa Sunan an-Nasaa'ee** (2/92).

added details), as has been affirmed in the principles of Fiqh. And the conjunction here further emphasizes the obligation, and it is his statement, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) “or Allaah will divide your hearts.” The likes of this type of threat is not stated except that it is an obligation as is not hidden from you.

- Secondly, the aforementioned straightening is only done by attaching and connecting the shoulder to the shoulder (of the one next to you), and the heel of the foot to the heel (of the one next to you) since this is what the companions did, may Allaah be pleased with them, when they were ordered to straighten and align their rows.

And due to this, al-Haafith ibn Hajar has stated in **al-Fath** after mentioning the addition to the statement of Anas from the first **hadeeth** that I brought,<sup>4</sup> “The benefit of this clear text is that the aforementioned action occurred during the time of the Prophet, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). And due to this, it (i.e. the **hadeeth**) is needed to clarify the intent of straightening and aligning the rows.

It is distressing that this **Sunnah** of straightening (the rows) is of little importance amongst of the Muslims; rather, they neglect it except a few of them. I have not seen any group from them (i.e. from those that practice this **Sunnah**), except **Ahlul Hadeeth**. I saw them in **Makkah** in the year 1368H being staunch in adhering to it (i.e. the **Sunnah** of straightening the rows) and other than it from the **Sunan** of Mustafaa, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). This is in contrast to others who follow the four **Madhaahib** – I am not excluding anyone, even the **Hanaabilah**. This has become a forgotten **Sunnah** amongst them; rather, they have abandoned it and turned away from it. The majority of their **Madhaahib** have text stating that the **Sunnah** is to place a distance of four fingers between the feet (i.e. between two people’s feet) and if this is increased then it is disliked as the details have come in **al-Fiqh ‘alaa al-Madhaahib al-Arba’ah** (1/207). The aforementioned measurement has no origin in the **Sunnah**. It is strictly an opinion. If things were set aright, it would be incumbent upon every **Imaam** and individual to stipulate (this **Sunnah**) so that this authentic **Sunnah** is not turned away from, as has been conveyed in the fundamental principles.

<sup>4</sup> Anas bin Maalik said, “And one of us would attach his shoulder to the shoulder of the one next to him and his foot to his foot (i.e. the foot of the one next to him)”. Related by *Bukhaaree* in his *Saheeh* (2/208) and Ibn Abbee Shaybah added an addition to this in *al-Musannaf* (1/301) at the end of it (i.e. the **hadeeth**), “If you were to go and do this today, you would be shunned as if you were a balky mule,” and its chain of transmission is *Saheeh*.

To summarize the statement, I urge and encourage the Muslims, and specifically the **Imaams** of the **Masaajid** that are concerned about following him, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and obtaining the virtue of reviving his **Sunnah**, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that they practice this **Sunnah**, are staunch upon it, and call the people to it until we are all united upon it and are saved from the threat, “Or Allaah will divide your hearts.” (The end of his speech)

Our Shaykh Muhammad bin ‘Uthaymeen has stated in **Sharh al-Mumti’** (3/11), “His statement, “*You will straighten your rows.*” The **Laam** is in response to the implicit swearing. The implicit speech is, “*I swear by Allaah that you will straighten your rows.*” This sentence is emphasized from three angles: Swearing, the **Laam**, and the **Noon**. There is a warning in this information since he said, “*You will straighten your rows or Allaah will cause division and controversy in your direction,*” i.e. in the direction of your sight until your hearts differ. There is no doubt that this is a threat for whoever leaves off straightening the rows. Due to this, the people of knowledge view straightening the rows to be an obligation. They prove that by

the Prophet’s, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), commanding that and his threatening against opposing it. Something that has come as a command and there is a threat of opposing it, it is not possible to say that it is only a **Sunnah**. This is the more weighty and correct statement concerning this issue, the obligation of straightening the rows, and if the **Jamaa’ah** does not straighten their rows, then they are sinning. (The end of his speech)

Al-Ba’lee has stated in **al-Ikhtiyaaraat** pg. 50, “What is apparent from the speech of Abool ‘Abbaas – Ibn Taymiyyah – is that it is obligatory to straighten the rows since he (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saw a man whose chest was protruding, so he said, ‘You will straighten your rows or Allaah will divide your hearts.’ And he said, may salutation and blessing be upon him, ‘Straighten your rows for surely straightening the rows is from the completion of the **Salaah** (prayer).’ [Agreed upon (i.e. by *Bukhaaree* and *Muslim*) *Bukhaaree* expounded upon it, ‘Chapter: The Sin of the One Who does not Straighten the Row.’<sup>5</sup> (The end of his speech)]

Al-Manaawee has stated in **Faid al-Qadeer** (2/76): “There is an order for straightening the rows and closing the gaps. There are many **ahaadeeth** that encourage this. The most comprehensive of them, ‘Straighten your rows and be lenient with the hands of your brothers...’” (The end of his speech)

<sup>5</sup> Refer to *Saheeh Bukhaaree* (1/254).

Ibn Hajar has stated in ***Fathul Baaree*** (2/168), “It is possible that Bukhaaree took the view that it is obligatory due to the context of the command in his statement, ‘Straighten your rows,’

and from the generality of his statement, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), ‘Pray as you see me praying,’ and from the threats against those who abandon it. So he viewed this to be more weighty and correct due to these conjunctions (i.e. added details). The reprimanding of Anas<sup>6</sup> occurred due to the obligation being left off. Even if he reprimanded them due to leaving off the ***Sunan***, even with the statement that it is obligatory, the prayer of the one who contrasts this is still correct due to the two contrasting views. This is supported by Anas, even though he reprimanded them, he did not order them to repeat the prayer.” (The end of his speech)

Ibn Hazm has stated in ***al-Muhallaa*** (4/52), “It is obligatory on those following the Imaam to straighten their rows one by one, to align them, and to make their shoulders and legs parallel...” (The end of his speech)

Ibn Hajar has stated in ***al-Fath*** (2/207), “And due to this, it is obligatory and neglecting it is ***Haraam*** (impermissible)...” (The end of his speech)

And Ibn al-Mulaqqin has stated in ***al-Il'aam*** (2/519), “The first view ordains the obligation of straightening the rows because of the order of the aforementioned threat of abandoning it. The understood threat is the abandoning of the union of the hearts, and based on this abandonment, it is obligatory.” (The end of his speech)

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<sup>6</sup> On Basheer bin Yasaar al-Ansaaree on Anas bin Maalik, “He arrived at Madinah, so it was said to him, ‘You have not reprimanded us since the time of the Prophet, (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?’ He said, ‘I do not disparage anything except that you do not straighten your rows.’” (Related by Bukhaaree in his *Saheeh* (1/254), and Ahmad in his *Musnad* (3/154)) I say, Bukhaaree has brought this *hadeeth* under, “Chapter: The Sin of the One Who does not complete the Rows.”

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